

In the Midst of Science

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The first day of high school is always a little rough.

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Chapter 1

Honey Lemon is *excited* .

It's the first day of class, after all - why *wouldn't* she be excited? It's just that there's a *slight* problem that might occur - the same thing that happened in middle school, of course. That everyone might start making fun of her because of her clothes again, or because of her too-bubbly personality, or simply because of her nationality. Thinking about it makes her sick, scared, frightened that she'd get ostracized by everyone again, and *oh* goodness, this is bad.

She slips on several bangles on her wrists for luck, then remembers an offhanded comment from one of her classmates last year, *what's with the bangles? They look ridiculous*, and she winces. This isn't good. She can't get into that sort of mindset. Her mother had said that it's fine, it's fine if they don't like how you look, what matters is that you do good...

Her eyes sting. One bangle goes off and slips back into the little accessory box.

High school, high school, *high school* .

She's mostly excited for college, of course, but high school is still at least something to get excited over. New classes! New teachers! New lessons! Hopefully more freedom to perform new experiments and not be scolded by the teacher! And... new classmates.

Honey Lemon twists the bangles around her wrist nervously. Right. Classmates. She swallows - she just hopes they'll be much nicer this time around.

She enters her classroom and looks around as inconspicuously as she can, afraid someone will judge her. Then she mentally shakes

her head, *no, Honey, you are not going to think like this!*, and rushes to a seat near the front. She almost hesitates, because then she thinks that everyone might tease her and call her the teacher's pet again, but she decides on it and sits down. She'd just look weirder if she ran and transferred seats after looking completely determined to get the front chair. *Ugh, I'm overthinking this.*

In an effort to act casual, she grabs her phone from her pocket and starts looking through the list of reminders she had made herself last night, highlighting and deleting the lines she's done. The only two left are *study extensively* and *ask if the science lab is open for use anytime* . Perfect. She can do this, she can do this. Feeling quite good about herself, she opens the camera app and prepares to take a selfie--

And that is when Honey Lemon sees *her* just one seat back.

Interest piqued, she carefully adjusts the screen of her camera so it provides as a mirror, allowing Honey Lemon to see the newcomer. She looks like she's just arrived, the top of her head messy and a few short strands sticking up. She sets her bag down next to her before digging out what looks like a small metal disk and fiddling with it with her bare hands. A spark of worry shoots up in the blonde - *shouldn't she wear gloves or anything? What if she gets hurt? I don't know anything about machinery, but it's probably dangerous to just go and do something as risky as that...*

Then she takes a good look at the girl's face and is *smitten* .

She's Asian, definitely, maybe Japanese or Korean; Honey Lemon isn't sure. What she *is* sure of, though, is how utterly *adorable* the girl is. *Look at those cheeks! Oh gosh, and her eyes are so pretty, I really hope she's not straight, eek...*

Just as the girl's eyes flicker upwards to glance at her, Honey Lemon quickly hunches down on her phone and pretends to type something on it. As soon as she feels it's safe, she looks back over and sighs in

relief. She's back to fiddling with the disk-like object. *Right, right. If I could just get a picture of her...*

She adjusts the camera as carefully as she can without making it too obvious, flashes a quick smile, and takes the photo. She made extra sure that her flash isn't on, and she's only all too grateful that her phone doesn't malfunction this one time. Opening up Snapchat, she sends the photo to Fred with the caption of *there's a rlly cute girl in my class* .

For a moment, Gogo looks up and spies the strange girl in front of her typing something on her phone. She catches a quick glimpse of herself, on the girl's phone, before she closes it and places it back in her pocket. The biker pauses, then continues her examination on her new project. Maybe she just photobombed a selfie.

English is her first class, where she tries not to fall asleep - it's not the lesson that's the problem, *really*, it's just that the teacher sounds about as dead and asleep as the dude snoring in the corner of the classroom. She takes notes as diligently as she can manage and praises whatever god is listening once the bell rings. Honey Lemon glances at the Asian girl behind her one last time, just in case, before exiting to her next class. She checks her schedule - right, it's... Science. Oh, yes, she can't *wait* .

"... I'm lost," she declares after a little while. There are still quite a few other people like her wandering in the hallways, but she's sure she's completely and utterly lost by this point. She has her apron and gloves and mask and everything else she needs, but she has *no idea* where the Science room actually *is* . Great. Just great. Couldn't she have gotten lost before some other subject? She can't - *won't* miss Science!

Someone taps her on the shoulder.

Honey Lemon just about jumps three feet in the air, her books nearly flying out of her arms. Someone calls out a hasty apology and helps her up to her feet. The blonde's about to laugh it off and just say she's a little jumpy on the first day of school, but when she turns around, she's struck speechless. It's her. It's the Asian girl. *Oh God, I was not prepared for this. What do I say? Uhh, you're cute? No, wait, she just helped me! Um, uh...*

"H-Hey!" Honey Lemon stutters out, somehow managing not to sound constipated. "Um, sorry about that, I didn't see you there! Ehehe, um..." Her voice trails off, and now she has no idea how to continue the conversation without sounding stupid. What do normal high-schoolers even talk about? She can only think about how she's so going to miss Science right now... oh, of course, Science! "Do you know where the Science room, by the way? 'Cause, I'm, uh, really lost, and..."

The Asian girl blinks, before nodding. "Just on my way there, too. Looks like we're in the same class for this one. Come on, 'Sabi told me it was over this way."

Honey Lemon does not know who "'Sabi" is, she doesn't know this girl's name, and she has no idea if she can trust her. But she's the only lead she has right now, and it's probably for the better that she goes along with her. Nodding and trying not to take note of her ridiculously dry throat, Honey Lemon trots after the girl, hopefully to where the Science room is located.

Luckily, this 'Sabi knows his way around the school, because they end up right in front of the Science room in a record time of one minute and twenty seconds. Honey Lemon is *sure* she's going to get lectured about this by the professor already - *I mean, late for the first day, like, how does that happen to someone?* - but it's not like she can do anything about it. Just suck it up, Honey, she tells herself, at least you actually got to the Science room in the first place.

The professor behind the teacher's table, who looks like he was just in the middle of a speech, pauses when he sees them. "Ah, the two

missing students in this class. Everyone else already has their lab partners, so it'd be convenient if you two went along with each other. Hurry to your table, now, it's the only one unoccupied, we've some experiments to do to make sure you all are fit for this class!"

Lab partners? Lab partners? I'm going to die. I'm going to die and go to Heaven. How did this happen to me? Nevertheless, the blonde nods and swallows thickly, flashing a weak smile as she follows the Asian girl to the table by the window. Honey Lemon almost starts to wonder why no one had taken this table, before realizing part of it at the edge is chipped away. Great, that can't be a good omen.

The professor continues on about how they were to do a practice experiment to see if they had understood the lecture he had just given, which both Honey Lemon and her lab partner had missed. The blonde tries to ignore the sinking feeling that they might just fail this class without a little bit of help, but hopefully, it's nothing she can't handle. If it comes to it, she can use her stored-up self-studied knowledge to work her way around the experiment without screwing up too much.

After he hands out the lab manuals and points at the page with the experiment they're going to perform today, the professor lets them all do what must be done. Honey Lemon immediately starts reading the text, eyes scouring every little letter, when there's a tap on her shoulder once more. Glancing back, she just barely avoids flushing at the sight of the Asian girl - she swears that girl will be the end of her. "We haven't been properly introduced yet, have we? Name's Gogo."

Gogo. Gogo. "Nice to meet you... Gogo!" she smiles, genuinely. "I'm Honey Lemon, um, it's great to work with you." The blonde inches her phone out of her pocket before snapping a quick selfie with Gogo. (What a name. She loves it.) "Hope you don't mind!"

Gogo pauses, before shrugging. "Don't post it on Facebook."

Honey Lemon nods, giggling to herself as she sends it to Fred with a caption of *she's in this class too! (we're lab partners!?)* . When the science enthusiast checks his phone later, she's sure she's going to have a word about how his Snapchat has never had that many notifications before.

"See how diffusion works with... wait, what?" Gogo's brow scrunches up. "Did we even study diffusion in middle school? I sure as hell don't remember that shit."

"Oh, no, don't worry about that," Honey Lemon all but sings, whistling as she carefully places the agar blocks on the petri dish. She's done this experiment before, when she was seven and yet to know what diffusion meant. It'd been fun, but... "We're supposed to use hydrochloric acid here, but all we have is... food dye." She raises the small bottle of green and rather putrid food dye up, scrutinizing it. "Is there something wrong? Maybe I should ask teacher..."

From the corner of her eye, she can see Gogo looking slack-jawed. Honey Lemon blinks, before turning to face her properly. "Ah, u-uh." The Asian's intense gaze sends her stammering again. *Sheesh, she really has to be this cute?* "Is something wrong...?"

"You look like you've done this, I don't know, a million times," Gogo exclaims. "You a scientist in the making or what? You sure don't look the type."

"Don't look the type..." It hits too close to home, where everyone used to make fun of her, *all frills and pink clothes today again, huh?* and it *hurts* . She knows that Gogo hadn't meant it that way, but God above, that doesn't mean it doesn't hurt. Honey Lemon nods painfully, throwing on a smile as best as she can, and redirecting her attention to the bottle she holds. "S'pose that's not a bad thing..."

(And, somehow, Gogo can see.)

"Sorry." A pause. "I said something, huh? My bad. I didn't mean anything by it, so you know, but..." Gogo turns away, rubbing the back of her head sheepishly. "Uh, yeah. Right. So, that food dye--"

Gogo steps forward, and all of a sudden pain explodes on Honey Lemon's foot. She's yelping in an instant, clutching on to her right foot to lessen the throbbing, and-- wait, where's the food dye?

There's a *splat* sound, then a loud and quite vulgar curse, and the professor's heavy footsteps. The blonde staggers up to her legs, most of her weight on her left one, eyes wide and magnified even further by her pink-framed glasses. A disgusting blob of green substance is splattered all over Gogo's lab coat, already dripping down and staining the white fabric even further. In Honey Lemon's haste, she grabs her phone and nearly slams it on the edge of the table, just barely managing to catch it before it hit. Then she realizes she *pressed the Goddamn photo button*, and almost screams at the sight of her up-close face and Gogo's disgusted expression in the background.

What a first day, that's for sure.

The rest of the subjects pass by without a hitch, though Gogo does show up at the period before lunch, Math. That's also when things start getting interesting again.

As soon as the bell rings, Honey Lemon stands up, picks up her bag, adjusts her *other* bag (the nice pink shoulderbag with the jewel designs and everything), and gets ready for the first lunch on the first day. God, she just *really* hopes she can snag a table at the cafeteria, and that the food isn't horrible. Or at least *too* horrible; getting excited about high school in general is one thing, but she's not totally excited for the food. It's got to be better than middle school, right?

On a whim, she checks her phone and finds that she hadn't exited from the camera app yet. The photo from Science is still there, unsurprisingly enough, though Honey Lemon had been hoping that if

she forced herself to forget about it, all other evidence of it happening would still be there. Her finger hovers over the delete option for a moment or two, before she sighs and Snapchats it to Fred. *I SPILLED FOOD DYE ON HER LAB COAT*, and she's done.

Just as she pockets her phone and prepares to actually leave the classroom this time to head towards the cafeteria, a figure sidles up next to her. Honey Lemon blinks, looks down slightly at the figure, then tries not to choke on air.

Gogo blows a small pink bubble, pops it, then looks up at the blonde. "Come with me."

"Uh, w-what--"

"The food here is shit, you have my word." Gogo smirks lightly. "I know a cafe."

Honey Lemon pauses. "Are we allowed to go off-campus?"

"We're high-schoolers now, do you know anyone who cares?"

"Hey, 'Sabi!" Gogo exclaims, sauntering right up to the counter like she owns the place. Well, Honey Lemon certainly wouldn't mind, especially if the blonde got to see what Gogo looks like from the behind, in more ways than one. "Thanks for those directions earlier, wouldn't have made it without them..."

With Honey Lemon seated at a table, having given her order to Gogo, she stealthily takes out her phone and checks her notifications. Fred's *girl ur SO gay* had been sent a little over five minutes ago. She types in a quick *yeah hold on I got a good pic* and snaps a photo so quick, the sides are blurred. What matters is that Honey Lemon managed to get a photo of Gogo chatting with a tall, burly man behind the counter, and with the *best* part...

She sends the photo with a caption of ^^ *ughhh she's so cuuuuute* ^^ and bites her lip to hide a smile at Fred's response of *jesus if u go any further she might start catchin on* .

After Gogo comes back with the receipt and a tray of actually appetizing food, she sets it down on the table and takes the seat across Honey Lemon. The blonde closes her phone politely and faces Gogo. And stares. And stares. And continues staring.

Gogo glances over at her and looks away quickly, face tinted red. "Uh, somethin' you need?" She takes out her gum and places it on some tissue, before taking a sip of her Coke.

"Ah." The blonde blinks. "So-Sorry about that! I..." She redirects her gaze downwards at her food, feeling her cheeks heating up. She'd only meant to look up, nod, and smile thankfully! Wait, hadn't Gogo paid for the food? Urgh, if she brings that up now, it'd be awkward... it's almost like Gogo's the moon in the sky, something - someone, more of - that she can only look at and admire from afar. Then again, it's not like they're very far from each other right now, but...

Honey Lemon picks up her spoon and fork and nods. "T... Thanks for the food. Did... Did you pay for it? Um, here, let me pay you back--"

"Nah, it's fine," Gogo says, waving it off. The blonde slowly replaces her wallet back in her pouch. "'Sabi gives me free discounts all the time. Ain't that right, 'Sabi?" She yells over the throng of customers at the same man at the cashier. He gives her a deadpan glare before returning to the person in front of him. Gogo nods and smirks, breaking her chopsticks with practiced ease and gathering up her noodles. "Also, it's kind of an apology for stepping on your foot. That wasn't my lab coat, by the way, snatched it from the storage before I found you, so it's probably fine. Anyway," Gogo starts, too quick for Honey Lemon to formulate a response to her previous statement. "I've been meaning to ask, but is that number normal for you?" She gestures over to the numerous bangles dangling off Honey Lemon's wrists with a playful tone.

The blonde swallows and bites the inside of her cheek nervously. The inevitable comment about the bangles. Of course. "I... It's just, um..."

"Oh, I get it, you're... Latina?" Gogo nods. "Would explain the accent *and* the bangles. No worries, I'm Korean myself." She shrugs. "People 'round here aren't so accepting. Used to have people make fun of the stereotypical Asian accent all the time. Bitches."

Honey Lemon cracks a smile. Gogo all but makes the atmosphere so much better around her. "Yeah, I... Yeah." She breathes in, breathes out. Inhale, exhale. Maybe this won't be so bad after all. "Thanks for, um, this."

"You're welcome." She slurps her noodles up rather noisily, but Honey Lemon finds it more funny than disgusting. Then Gogo nods towards her bangles. "I think those are cute, too."

The blonde tries not to blush, and fails miserably. When Gogo's preoccupied with her meal, Honey Lemon digs out her phone and hurriedly reads the last message Fred sent (*so r u 2 makin out now or*) and furiously replies with a *NO WE'RE NOT BUT SHE THINKS MY BANGLS ARE CUTE AND DO YOU KNOW HW MUC I WANT T KISS HER????* . She promptly sends it without fixing the typos and groans internally.

When Honey Lemon has to leave, Gogo bids her goodbye and leans on the counter casually as she waits for the bell to ring. Wasabi looks over at her and sighs. "So."

"The tall chick's been taking pictures of me all day," the biker bluntly responds. "Also wow, she's kinda-really fucking cute."

"I think she took one when you were ordering stuff. And--*language*, Gogo! There're kids in here!"